

Left to right, top, Pork Tourtière, Tourtière à l'Alsace, Beef Tourtière; middle, Duck Tourtière, Beef and

The upper crust in tour

Readers offer their tried-and-true family recipe

By JULIAN ARMSTRONG
Gazette Food Editor

Quebec's tourtière tradition is alive, well and as satisfying a holiday habit if it dates back four generations or a mere year.

This warming winter dish conjures up contented memories in both old and young *Gazette* readers, we discovered from the 40 recipes and recollections that were sent in from all parts of the Montreal area and such centres as Quebec City, Cap de la Madeleine, Deux Montagnes, Richmond, Stanstead and Sherbrooke.

"I can't eat bought tourtière," wrote Cheryl Berger, 21, of Dollard des Ormeaux. "I wait for every winter for one reason alone — to eat home-baked tourtière," she added, enclosing her family's three-generation recipe she took with her when she left home.

Ingredients in this pie vary widely, we found. Most contained ground pork, often combined with veal or beef, and with potatoes or bread crumbs to mop up the juices. A few were made with poultry and game.

"I like to add a piece of moose meat and a rabbit or two," wrote Vida Agnesi of Douglastown, enclosing a tourtière of pork flavored with leeks along with the usual onions. And Mrs. J. Levina of Richmond included rabbit and venison in her list of meats to add to the basic pork.

Robert Sternberg of Cote St. Luc sent a kosher version using veal and fresh tomatoes. Several contributors had cut calories by cooling the cooked meat mixture, then removing the solidified fat.

Others revealed they provide contrast to the fat in either filling or pastry. Marie-Ange Drouin of Montreal adds lemon juice to her pastry.

Sources for this dish varied too, from grandmother's receipt books to neighbors to newspaper recipes dating back as far as 40 years ago.

Marcel and Denise Gauvin of Lachine enjoy a pie with a pastry that came originally from a chef on Canadian National trains, and a meat mixture flavored with herbs and soya sauce. Estelle Katz of Ville St. Laurent remembers acquiring her recipe many years ago from a now

Tourtière à l'Alsace

Monique Gopal, Chateauguay

Early settlers who came to Quebec from Alsace were responsible for the first local tourtières, tourtes, or tartes, writes Monique Gopal, who acquired this recipe from her late father, a pastry chef in Colmar, Alsace, France.

The meat mixture is marinated, placed raw in the puff pastry crust and flavored with the addition of chicken livers. One taster was reminded of a lean, light pate, another called it "the quiche of tourtières."

- 250 g ground veal (½ pound)
- 250 g ground pork (½ pound)
- 250 g ground beef (½ pound)
- 185 mL Sylvaner Alsatian or Riesling wine
- 2 dry shallots or 3 medium onions
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil (30 mL)
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour (30 mL)
- Salt, pepper
- Fresh, chopped parsley
- 3 chicken livers (optional)
- 2 pounds puff pastry (1 kg)*
- 1 egg yolk

The day before baking the tourtière, marinate the veal, pork and beef in the wine covered in the refrigerator.

When ready to make the tourtière heat 2 tablespoons oil in large, heavy frying pan. Chop shallots or onions finely and saute in hot oil until soft and glazed. Add eggs, flour, salt, pepper and parsley, and mix well.

Roll out one pound (500 g) of the pastry (*Gopal buys it at Kosher Quality Bakery, 5855 Victoria Ave., Montreal) into a circle measuring about 29 cm (11½ inches).

Arrange in black, metal, 25-cm

(10-inch) pie plate. Spread evenly with meat mixture. Slice chicken livers and arrange evenly over meat. Sprinkle with salt and pepper.

Roll out remaining one pound (500 g) pastry in a circle measuring about 25 cm (10 inches). Arrange on top of meat. Wet edges with water and fold outer edge under, pressing it to lower pastry.

Preheat oven to 450 degrees F (230 degrees C). Mix egg yolk with one tablespoon water and a pinch of salt and brush all over pie. Decorate crust with leftover dough, as desired, and make air vents with a fork so steam can escape during baking.

Bake tourtière in preheated oven for 20 minutes, then lower heat to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C) and bake 25 minutes more. Serve hot tourtière with a green salad, and a celery root salad, and Sylvaner Alsatian or Riesling wine.

Pork Tourtière

Kathleen Fiset Pineau
Quebec City

This recipe was bequeathed to Pineau, who came from the Lower St. Lawrence region, some 40 years ago. The gift of an aunt who was considered a Cordon Bleu cook, its flavoring has been altered somewhat to suit her family.

- 1¼ pounds ground pork (625 g)
- ½ to ¾ cup cold water (125 to 175 mL)
- ½ cup finely chopped onions (125 mL)
- ¼ cup finely chopped celery (50 mL)
- 1 teaspoon pepper (5 mL)
- 1 bay leaf
- ½ teaspoon savory (2 mL)
- ¼ teaspoon rosemary (1 mL)
- ¼ teaspoon grated nutmeg (1 mL)

Pinch cinnamon
¼ cup rolled oats
Pastry for 2-crust
pie (23 cm)

In a large, heavy frying pan, add pork and cold water. When it reaches a boil, add onion, pepper, bay leaf, savory, nutmeg and cinnamon. Simmer over medium heat for about halfway through cooking.

Preheat oven to 425 degrees F (220 degrees C). Add the meat mixture and cook for another couple of minutes. Add a 9-inch (23 cm) pie pan and add meat mixture, and roll out the dough.

Cut air vents in top crust as desired. Bake in preheated oven for 15 minutes, then heat to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C) and bake another 25 minutes until done.

Beef and Pork Tourtière

Margo Peterson, Pointe

Submitted by a former realtor who has enjoyed making tourtière for more than 30 years, this recipe has become a favorite with her children, some of whom have moved into French-speaking areas. "They are now making tourtière at Christmas instead of French tourtière," she writes.

- 2 onions, finely chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- ½ cup chopped celery (50 mL)
- 2 carrots, pared, and minced (250 g)
- 2 pounds minced beef (900 g)
- ½ pound minced beef (250 g)
- 1 cup fresh bread crumbs (250 mL)

Expert tips on making memor

Home economist Labelle offers her tip on turning out a tourtière to remember.

• Meat with 20 to 25 per cent fat gives the best texture although not

possibility of a dry pie since frozen meat usually loses natural juices as it thaws. Extra seasonings can disguise the loss of meat flavor.

• Cool the meat mixture comple-

than the inner part. You can protect the rim with an aluminum collar.

• A thick rim to the pie will take longer to cook, so will

ourtière; middle, Duck Tourtière, Beef and Pork Tourtière, Spiced Tourtière; bottom, Tourtière Maison.

Just in tourtière tradition

and-true family recipes for this Quebec-style treat

h) pie plate. Spread evenly meat mixture. Slice chicken and arrange evenly over. Sprinkle with salt and pep-

out remaining one pound (500 g) in a circle measuring 25 cm (10 inches). Arrange on meat. Wet edges with water and outer edge under, pressing over pastry.

Preheat oven to 450 degrees F (220 degrees C). Mix egg yolk with 1 tablespoon water and a pinch of salt and brush all over pie. Decorate with leftover dough, as desired and make air vents with a fork. The meat can escape during baking. Bake tourtière in preheated oven for 15 minutes, then lower heat to 350 degrees F (200 degrees C) and bake 25 minutes more. Serve hot with a green salad, and a root salad, and Sylvaner or Riesling wine.

Pork Tourtière

Kathleen Fiset Pineau
Quebec City

This recipe was bequeathed to me, who came from the Lower St. Lawrence region, some 40 years ago. It was the gift of an aunt who was herself a Cordon Bleu cook, its ingredients have been altered somewhat to suit her family.

1 1/2 pounds ground pork (625 g)
1/2 cup cold water (125 mL)
1/2 cup finely chopped onions (125 mL)
1/2 cup finely chopped celery (50 mL)
1 teaspoon pepper (5 mL)
1 bay leaf
1 teaspoon savory (2 mL)
1 teaspoon rosemary (1 mL)
1 teaspoon grated nutmeg (1 mL)

Pinch cinnamon
1/4 cup rolled oats (50 mL)
Pastry for 2-crust, 9-inch pie (23 cm)

In a large, heavy frying pan, add pork and cold water. When mixture reaches a boil, add onions, celery, pepper, bay leaf, savory, rosemary, nutmeg and cinnamon and cook over medium heat for 1 1/4 hours; halfway through cooking time, add salt.

Preheat oven to 425 degrees F (220 degrees C). Add the rolled oats to meat mixture and cook, stirring, for another couple of minutes. Line a 9-inch (23 cm) pie pan with pastry, add meat mixture, and cover with pastry.

Cut air vents in top crust and decorate as desired. Bake in preheated oven for 15 minutes, then reduce heat to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C) and bake another 25 minutes or until done.

Beef and Pork Tourtière

Margo Peterson, Pointe du Lac

Submitted by a former Mont-Tremblant resident who has enjoyed it for more than 30 years, this recipe has become a favorite with Peterson's children, some of whom have married into French-speaking families. "They are now making this meat pie at Christmas instead of the original French tourtière," the owner writes.

2 onions, finely chopped
4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1/2 cup chopped celery (125 mL)
2 carrots, pared, shredded
2 pounds minced steak (1 kg)
1/2 pound minced lean pork (250 g)
1 cup fresh breadcrumbs (250 mL)

1 teaspoon Herbes de Provence (5 mL)*
1 teaspoon salt (5 mL)
1/4 teaspoon pepper (1 mL)
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese (125 mL)
1/4 cup finely chopped fresh parsley (50 mL)
Pastry for 2 9-inch (23-cm) double-crust pies
Vinegar*

Using large, heavy frying pan, add meat, onions, garlic, celery and carrots and cook until meat has lost its pink tint.

Add bread crumbs, Herbes de Provence (*sold in specialty food shops in jars covered with red and white checked cotton), salt, pepper, cheese and parsley and mix gently, but thoroughly.

Preheat oven to 450 degrees F (230 degrees C). Line two 9-inch (23-cm) pie plates with pastry and divide meat mixture evenly between the two. Cover with top crust, seal, cut hole in centre to let steam escape.

Brush tops with vinegar (*malt, wine or apple cider vinegar), place on bottom rack of preheated oven and bake for 15 minutes. Lower heat to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C), move pies to middle rack and bake for 35 to 40 minutes more, or until pastry is golden brown. Makes two tourtières.

Duck Tourtière

Mrs. C. Maisonneuve
Terrace Vaudreuil

The most elaborate and surprising tourtière of those submitted, this recipe contains so much sauce that it is first cousin to a deep-dish meat pie. The sauce is rich in natural gelatine, so could well be served cold. It was given to Maisonneuve by a close family friend many years ago.

1 large duck (about 2 kg or

4 1/2 pounds)
2 tablespoons cubed salt pork (30 mL)
1 large onion, minced
2 cups chicken consomme (500 mL)
Water
1/2 cup browned flour (125 mL)*
1 cup cold water (250 mL)
1/2 teaspoon dried savory (2 mL)
1/4 teaspoon ground cloves (1 mL)
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon (1 mL)
1/4 teaspoon nutmeg (1 mL)
Biscuit-type Pastry (see recipe)

Clean duck and cut into pieces. Render salt pork and use to fry duck pieces until browned on all sides, adding onion and sautéing it along with duck.

Remove duck and onion to large heavy pot. Add chicken consomme, bring to a boil and simmer until duck is tender, 1 1/2 to 2 hours, adding enough water to cover every half hour. You should have 3 cups of liquid at the end of the cooking time. Discard bones and skin. Let cool and skim off fat.

Mix browned flour with cold water and add to meat mixture (*to brown flour, spread dry frying pan with flour and cook, stirring, until flour browns, or bake at 350 degrees F or 180 degrees C for about 30 minutes). Let simmer for a few minutes until liquid thickens. Add savory, cloves, cinnamon and nutmeg, mixing well.

Preheat oven to 450 degrees F (230 degrees C). Line 2-quart (2.5 L) casserole with pastry. Add duck mixture. Cover with remaining pastry, cutting vents so steam can escape. Bake in preheated oven for 10 minutes, then reduce heat to 350 degrees F (180 degrees C) for 15 minutes, or until golden brown.

Pastry

2 cups all-purpose flour (500 mL)
3 teaspoons baking powder (15 mL)
1/2 teaspoon baking soda (2 mL)
6 tablespoons shortening (90 mL)
3/4 cup (about) sour milk (175 mL)

on making memorable meat pie

ability of a dry pie since frozen usually loses natural juices. Thaws. Extra seasonings can make up for the loss of meat flavor.

Cool the meat mixture completely before filling the pie crust or

than the inner part. You can protect the rim with an aluminum foil collar.

• A thick rim to the pie takes longer to cook, so will avoid overcooking. To make, roll the lower

teaspoons water (10 mL) and brush mixture on pastry, using a brush with real bristles. A synthetic brush will give you a streaky effect.